

MINUTES of the meeting of Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE) held at: The Council Chamber, Brockington, 35 Hafod Road, Hereford, HR1 1SH on Monday, 5th March, 2007 at 2.00 p.m.

Present: Councillor J Stone (Chairman)

Cllr: WU Attfield, Mrs. C. Ault, Revd. P. Barlow, Mr. P. Bowen, Mrs. J. Brown, Miss L Langstaff, Mrs S McCamley, Mr. Z. Pandor and Rev L Rickards

In attendance: Mrs Joanne Angell – Senior Teacher/KS1, Mrs Giselle Collins – KS2 Teacher together with Jamie, Thomas and Jamie from Stoke Prior Primary School.
Rev N. Paterson
Victoria Ikwuemesi

32. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Cllr PE Harling; Ms K Mayglothling; Mr M Rollnick, and Revd I Terry.

33. NAMED SUBSTITUTES

There were no named substitutes.

34. MINUTES

RESOLVED That subject to amending the meeting finish time to 4.30pm the minutes of the meeting held 8th December 2006 be approved and signed by the Chairman.

35. RESPONSE TO WRITTEN PUBLIC QUESTIONS

No written questions had been received.

36. SACRE ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2007 - UPDATE

SACRE received a report on developments for the 2007 SACRE Annual Conference.

The Consultant for Religious Education circulated a draft conference programme for discussion and reported that in a change to the customary key note speaker this years conference would showcase the work undertaken at Stoke Prior Primary School and Wigmore High School. She also outlined details of the intended workshops.

The Chairman introduced representatives from Stoke Prior Primary School who had been invited to inform the meeting of how they were using ICT to bring RE alive.

Mrs S McCamley, Headteacher, together with three school children and two teachers from Stoke Prior Primary School gave a brief overview of their intended contribution

to the Annual Conference. They explained how the school had taken part in an RE/ICT intervention activity led by RE Today in conjunction with BECTa. The activity had funded the purchase of ICT equipment (5 video cameras, 2 tripods and relevant software) to enable the pupils to interview and video members of faith communities in their local area.

It was explained how the whole class had contributed to the project by compiling the questions, undertaking interviews, shooting and editing the video footage and selecting the accompanying music for the resultant video – excerpts of which were shown to the meeting. The teachers reported that pupils had taken a more proactive interest in the place or people they were to video e.g. the church, and had shown a greater respect and courtesy for people or places they had been in contact with. The completed video would be shown at the SACRE Annual Conference.

SACRE appreciated how this multi-faceted approach to learning in RE had contributed to the many aspects of learning e.g. RE, ICT, planning and communication skills.

The Consultant for Religious Education further reported that Wigmore High School would soon be hosting a day conference with groups of Muslim year 10/11 students from Birmingham with the aim of furthering their understanding of each others faith and cultural backgrounds. The events of the day would be conveyed as part of the Annual Conference. It was also intended that a brief report on this event would be made to the July SACRE meeting.

SACRE applauded the work being undertaken by the pupils and teachers at Stoke Prior Primary School and at Wigmore High School.

RESOLVED That the report be noted and the programme as outlined for the 2007 Annual Conference be approved.

37. CONSULTATION ON THE QCA KS3 REVIEW: SACRE'S RESPONSE

SACRE received a report on the online consultation on proposed changes to the national curriculum at Key Stage 3 (KS3) through the Secondary Curriculum review.

Vicky Ward – General Inspector, reported that the online review, co-ordinated by QCA, was initially of KS3 but was widened to include KS4 and would conclude on 30th April 2007. To explain the key elements of the review she circulated a briefing paper entitled “The Secondary Curriculum Review 2007 – An overview with regard to Religious Education”.

She reported that the content and core values of the National Curriculum introduced in the 1980s remained and the review aimed to build on its achievements and modernise the curriculum to meet the needs of the 21st century. The intention was to: give teachers a more flexible framework for planning teaching; create more scope for teachers to tailor the curriculum to meet the needs of each individual student; make learning an active rather than passive event, and encourage schools to be innovative in the way they plan the school timetable.

The approach to Religious Education in the review was to build on the non-statutory framework for RE in 2008-09, the year in which the new school curriculum will be implemented. The relevance of RE to the Every Child Matters agenda and the findings of the Ajebo Review (reported elsewhere on the agenda) encouraged QCA to offer an alternative form for the RE framework in a form consistent with that of other subjects.

She further reported that the review proposed that the content and text of the non-statutory programmes of study for RE remain the same. In the revised form the information would be re-organised under headings that were the same as for other subjects. The revised form would contain explanations, examples, additional information and clarification. Case studies and further guidance would be issued in due course.

The RE Council, NASACRE and other faith groups had given initial support to the proposals and therefore no official consultation on the RE elements would be undertaken but feedback would be invited through meetings.

SACRE thanked Vicky Ward for her comprehensive assessment of the online review documentation.

From the information now received SACRE were generally content with the approach being taken, however, they wished to ensure that RE was properly represented in the curriculum and therefore it was suggested that a small working group meet to make an appropriate response on behalf of SACRE. A question arose over how in the longer term, with the proposed closer integration of curriculum subjects, could the right to withdraw be applied.

RESOLVED that the report be noted and a Working Group be comprised of Mr P Bowen, Miss L Langstaff and the Consultant for Religious Education meet to make an appropriate response to the proposals on behalf of SACRE.

38. DIVERSITY AND CITIZENSHIP REPORT BY SIR KEITH AJEGBO

SACRE noted the publication of Sir Keith Ajegbo's report into diversity and citizenship and debated local religious education opportunities and implications arising from the report.

The Consultant for Religious Education commented that it was very welcome that the Ajegbo report clearly identified the contribution RE was already making through the NSNF to exploring and valuing diversity, and particularly welcomed the definition of diversity which included mention of religion (page 15 of the report) and she suggested that the contribution of RE to this area should be brought to the attention of Herefordshire High Schools.

RESOLVED That the report be noted.

39. SACRE MEMBERSHIP

Members were advised of changes to the membership of SACRE.

The Democratic Services Officer reported that following nomination by the Association of Secondary Teachers, Miss L. Langstaff had been appointed to represent the secondary teacher sector.

He further reported that enquiries were continuing concerning a replacement Sikh representative.

SACRE considered the co-option of Mrs A. Daniel, Kingsland CE Primary School, and agreed that the Local Authority be requested to invite Mrs Daniel to become a non-voting co-opted member.

RESOLVED

That

- a) **The appointment of Miss L Langstaff as representative for the Secondary teacher sector be noted;**
- b) **The current position regarding the appointment of a Sikh representative be noted; and**
- c) **SACRE recommend to the Local Authority that Mrs Angela Daniel be appointed as non-voting Co-opted member.**

40. COLLECTIVE WORSHIP GUIDANCE - UPDATE

SACRE received a progress report on the publication and launch of the Collective Worship Guidance "Finding Treasure" for primary schools.

The Primary School Improvement Manager reported that final reading of the printers' proof copy would be undertaken in the next few days following which the guidance would be printed. She emphasised that the printing costs would need to be met from the current years budget. Subject to confirmation by the Director of Education, Hereford Diocese, regarding a launch date and venue, she hoped that the Bishops Palace, Hereford may be used early next term.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted and subject to final consultation with the Chairman the Primary School Improvement Manager liaise with the Diocesan Director of Education and proceed with arrangements to launch the guidance.

41. WEBSITE DEVELOPMENTS

SACRE were advised of the materials to support teaching and learning in RE available on the Herefordshire Children and Young People's Services website.

The Consultant for RE reported that the Religious Education Syllabus; non-statutory guidance and associated information for teachers was now available under the curriculum section on the web site at www.education.herefordshire.gov.uk.

RESOLVED That the report be noted.

42. PROPOSED MULTI-FAITH FESTIVAL - UPDATE

SACRE received an update on the development of a proposed Multi-Faith Festival.

The Consultant for Religious Education reported that the Herefordshire based Multi-faith Development Group had submitted a detailed bid for funding to the Herefordshire Local Network Fund to support a multi-faith festival in Herefordshire. The result of the bid was expected around the 26th March. Provided funding was forthcoming the Group intended to holding a two day event at Holmer Primary School with schools invited to send a nominated co-ordinator and limited number of pupils to participate. The Festival would be held immediately prior to the SACRE Annual Conference in September thereby enabling the key festival speakers to also facilitate workshops at the SACRE Conference.

RESOLVED That the position be noted.

43. FINDINGS FROM SCHOOL MONITORING VISITS

SACRE considered the findings from school Religious Education monitoring visits

undertaken during 2006/07 and discussed issues or themes arising from the visits.

The Consultant for Religious Education reported that as a continuation of her monitoring visits to schools, the result of visits to 5 primary schools had been reported to the July 2006 meeting, she had visited a further 4 primary and 1 high school during January/February 2007.

She explained that all schools visited had been sent a religious education self evaluation document in advance of the visit which acted as a starting point for discussion. Schools had also been invited to provide examples of pupil's RE work, together with any RE planning documents. Her key findings were:

Report on Primary Schools visit:

Ofsted recognise the subject co-ordinator as the pivotal factor in developing good RE in a school. All 4 primary schools visited had new subject co-ordinators. Supporting and developing the confidence of the co-ordinator became a key issue. All were committed to improving the teaching and learning of RE; most had a clear vision for the subject; however, all felt at least somewhat inadequate for the task facing them. Most wanted guidance and reassurance about what they should be doing.

Agreed Syllabus implementation: Implementation was found to be mixed. One school had only partially introduced it; one had not started it and was still using the previous syllabus, others had made more progress. In one school the planners had been redeveloped in line with the 2006 syllabus, documents were available both as hard copy and in folders on the school network. The issues identified related more to helping teachers be clear about what they were trying to achieve within the units – to select appropriate learning strategies, which achieved these ends.

Standards: most of those interviewed had little idea about the standards of achievement of children in RE and several were not aware of the levels. One was keen to use 'I can' approach and had tried linking RE objectives to the whole school approach (MUST SHOULD COULD) – but needed more help and reassurance with this.

Teaching and learning: the schools seemed adequately resourced in terms of pupil resources with frequent reference made to the use of interactive white boards and software such as Espresso. Issues arising related to how resources were used to enable children to achieve the outcomes expected by the syllabus. Teachers were still largely focusing on AT1 – learning about religion – and were much less confident about AT2 learning from religion.

Time: adequate time was given 'on paper' to the teaching of RE, although it was not always possible to verify how much was actually in place. Concerns about time in a pressurised curriculum were raised several times. In one school RE was only just being implemented because planning time was prioritised for the new maths and literacy training ready for Sept 07.

Planning to ensure implementation of the syllabus: This was found to be underway and ongoing. Issues were identified concerning the use of: the key questions; the use of the levels, and making sure teachers' customised planners to show what they were actually doing.

Non statutory guidance: had been found to be very welcome and helpful.

Report on the High School visit:

- Excellent achievement in GCSE had been identified with pupils voluntarily undertaking the full course in a very limited time slot and achieving excellent results.
- Examples of creative and imaginative work in RE – focus of the department was on making RE ‘relevant and engaging’.
- The requirement to provide RE for all in the 6th form was taken seriously. Some provision was made but it was hoped that more development might follow. She had suggested the possibility of linking with another high school with 6th form for day conference.
- The School had particularly valued the visit from Zack Pandor to talk about the Muslim faith.
- The opportunities for working together with other High schools had been valued in the past - especially the school closure day meeting of RE departments across the county – the school would value more of these.
- Contact with feeder primaries was largely limited to one local primary but the school had excellent primaries in the area with good RE. It was suggested that the school could be more pro-active about establishing RE links with other schools.

SACRE noted that the monitoring visits had been found to be very useful by all those taking part. The use of the self-evaluation tool (part of the self-evaluation framework) had helped the school to think about what they should be doing and gave some criteria against which they could judge themselves.

During debate on how to involve those schools, which for whatever reason may be reluctant to invite a visit, the Primary School Improvement Manager reported that the schools inspection team may be in a position to broker appropriate contact.

RESOLVED That

- a) **the report on the 4 primary schools and 1 high school as outlined above be noted; and**
- b) **it be recommended to the local authority that the monitoring visits be continued and efforts be made to encourage those schools who may be reluctant to invite a monitoring visit to do so.**

44. QCA ANNUAL REPORT - PILOTING A NEW REPORT FORMAT

SACRE were updated on the piloting by QCA of a new format for the Annual Report to QCA.

The Democratic Services Officer reported that QCA were piloting a new format for the SACRE Annual Report to QCA. The format being piloted was based around the SACRE self-evaluation and currently contained a very wide range of issues to be covered in the Annual Report. Ten SACRE's had used the new format for compiling their 2006 report and QCA were currently evaluating the resultant reports. It was anticipated that QCA would issue new guidance in the Summer of 2007 for use in compiling the 2007 SACRE Annual Report.

RESOLVED That the report be noted.

45. STRONG SACRES, GOOD RE - CONFERENCE REPORT

SACRE received a report on the conference ‘Strong SACREs, Good RE’ sponsored

by QCA, RE Council and NASACRE.

The Chairman apologised for not producing a written report following his attendance at the conference, however, he referred to the article in the winter edition of SACRE News which he felt gave a fair reflection of proceedings. He particularly highlighted the roll of SACRE and the disparity around the country in their size, funding, professional support, faith community involvement and vision. Having completed a self-evaluation of the work of this SACRE, he judged it to be between the 'established' and 'advanced' categories. The need to undertake further monitoring of RE in schools had been identified, however, he accepted that this was linked to the availability of resources.

RESOLVED That the report be noted.

**46. PARTICIPATION IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE HEREFORDSHIRE
CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S PLAN**

SACRE noted the position regarding the development of the Herefordshire Children's and Young People's Plan.

The Primary School Improvement Manager reported that the Herefordshire Children's and Young People's Plan was a broad strategic document, which gave strategic guidance to many other plans and strategy documents and therefore by its nature elements of citizenship, RE, PSHE were included in the broader sense. The Plan covered a 3 year period and was reviewed annually for submission to Ofsted in early June. This years review had already commenced and comments were needed as soon as possible.

SACRE noted the position and requested that: for this year the Primary School Improvement Manager review the Plan on behalf of SACRE; that a report on the Children's and Young People's Plan, specifically highlighting those elements in the Plan that SACRE may make comment or contribution to, be presented to a future meeting, and the SACRE work programme record the intention to consider and if appropriate contribute to the 2008 review of the Plan.

RESOLVED

That

- a) The report be noted and the Primary School Improvement Manager review the current Plan on behalf of SACRE;**
- b) A report on the Children's and Young People's Plan as indicated above be presented to a future meeting; and**
- c) SACREs wish to consider and if appropriate contribute to future reviews of the Plan be recorded in the SACRE work programme.**

47. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

SACRE noted that the next meeting would take place at 2.00 p.m. on 2nd July 2007 at Brockington, Hafod Road, Hereford.

The meeting ended at 4.30 p.m.

CHAIRMAN

